10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

reasons, be no openings in the ground-floor walls except the doorway, but square holes were left in those of the upper floor for windows. Except in rich houses these 'windows' were not glazed. At night they were closed in rich as in poor houses by propping stone slabs against them or sliding wooden panels across them. Those in a one-storeyed cluster were usually too high for the curious outside to peep through or the hostile to shoot through. Nikollë Gjetë Coka of Breg i Matit, putting his trust in the exemplary peace which King Zog's government had established throughout Albania, neglected this ancient precaution and was shot in 1938 by some Mirdites who thrust their rifles through the window of the room in which he sat at supper. At the top of a tower there were usually loop-holes, splayed to give a wider field of fire and low enough to let a man kneel as he shot. When these were found in a clustered house, as they often were, it was naturally on a vulnerable side, where they might also be reinforced by turrets in the wall of the farmyard. In the kitchen, where the women and children must spend the day and evening, the hearth continued in the middle because more people could sit round it in that position.

In planning his house the Albanian householder sought chiefly shelter from the elements and his enemies, and took no thought for beauty. When villages are picturesque, as many are, it is always for such extraneous reasons as their site, the line of their roofs against a lightly clouded sky, and the greenery surrounding them, rather than for the architecture of their individual houses. A tower, it is true, may have machicoulis over its door or under an upper window, and these give it distinction; its elevation and its usual situation on a knoll may also be attractive. The best examples, some of them over two hundred years old, may be seen in Lurë. But few clustered houses are more than an assemblage of featureless boxes.

In the bigger houses the furnishings altered little from those of the simplest type already described. Mattresses and pillows were probably added to the bedding, and the floor of the sitting-room instead of being left bare, was covered with mats made from reeds grown in the swamps near the coast. In the cold north and north-east there was usually a layer of earth under the mats; it made an admirable shield against winter blasts. Chairs remained rarities and stools were still confined to the kitchen with its chilly earthen floor. Workers being more plentiful, enough animals to make butter could be kept; the churn was made by hollowing out a section of tree-trunk.

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Y 342 [36] Settlements of the Vlahs are located in steep hillsides far away from the highways. The houses are large, have a number of rooms, and are two-story structures. They are rectangular and of stone; the higher the altitude the thicker the walls become. Windows are not very large, but all two-story buildings have a balcony on the second floor. When they consist of only one story the veranda is lacking (Capidan, 1941: 29-30). The floor plan of both stories consists of a central hall with side rooms. In winter the ground floor is used for habitation, in summer the upper story, although in large families both floors are occupied in summer and winter. Most daily activities take place in the hall of the ground floor. The side rooms there are generally for storage, and most of the sleeping rooms are on the top floor. One or two guest rooms may be present. (Capidan, 1941: 29-30).

Y 343 Farm Buildings. In the yard one finds the košara, a long rectangular building made of wicker with a straw roof, used for sheep in winter. The circular chicken coop is likewise of wicker (fig. 38). The most important structure is the plemnja, which is located close to the threshing floor and serves for the storage of straw and fodder. Poorer ones are made of wattle and daub and covered with straw; however, they are generally of the same construction as the house. They are one-story buildings and are found in all villages of southern Macedonia. While they may be located in the yard they usually form a group away from the houses (Milojević, 1921: 87-88).

Y 342 [233] Buildings Outside the Village. In the mountains one finds groups of up to twenty shepherds' huts that form a hamlet, looking like beehives from afar. They have a diameter of 5-6 meters and are not higher than 3 meters. They are constructed of woven twigs or straw and plastered with mud. The walls are about 10-15 centimeters thick. The upper part of the "bee-hive" has a roof consisting of about 5-7 rows of straw which merge with the walls. In the interior one finds a fireplace with a cauldron hanging over it, and a loom (Capidan, 1941: 31-32).

Y [354] [286]

Y [286] In addition to these huts the Vlah shepherds have portable tents. The tent is made by spreading a cloth of woven goat hair, 4-5 meters long and 2-3 meters wide, over a wooden frame. One of the triangular entrances remains open while the other is closed by woven cloth (Capidan, 1941: 32-33).

ALBANIA

A 133 Albania consists largely of rugged, barren mountains, bordered by a fairly wide coastal plain. Most of the available data deal with the mountain regions of northern Albania. This is an area of intensive feuding, where, as among the Spači clan, up to 32% of mortalities are the result of feuds (Nopcsa, 1925: 52). This internecine warfare is clearly reflected in the preference for stone

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buildings, fortress-like structure and small windows. House types thus serve as a clear index to the amount of feuding in any particular area. Where veranda houses prevail, conditions are fairly peaceful. This factor explains the almost mutually exclusive distribution of kulas and veranda houses in mountain areas, although how far this is borne out in lowland areas, I am unable to say. 341 578

Location and Types of Settlements. In the mountain regions west of Lake Scutari to Lake Ohrid one finds single farmsteads comprising one or two buildings. Only in the plains and at the foot of the mountains does one find Cvijić's Ibar type of settlements (Nopcsa, 1925: 6). This type is characterized by widely spaced, dense hamlets (Cvijić, 1918: 219). In southern Albania the village form is variable but agglomerated villages with crooked roads predominate (Cvijić, 1925: 224, Map IV). 361 [133] [341] [491]

House Types. Buildings of wickerwork and plaster are found only in the coastal plains, and even there they are rare (fig. 47). In the extreme north one finds houses of boards or logs. Most buildings are of stone; one finds some use of dry masonry, but generally mortar is used. Stone is preferred because it gives protection from fire and gunshot. In south and central Albania bond timbers are inserted into the stone walls; this pattern is lacking in northern Albania. The combination of stone foundation and wooden second story, found in Serbia, Bosnia, Rumania and Siebenburgen is missing in Albania (Nopcsa, 1925: 30). 342 184 [171]

Roofing may be of straw, shingles, slate, stone slabs or tiles. The simplest buildings in the mountains have roofs of corn stalks. Tiles are common both in the coastal and mountain regions. Roofing of stone slabs is widely distributed; most dairy houses in the high mountains are covered in this manner (Nopcsa, 1925: 31-32). High shingled roofs, common in Bosnia and eastern Montenegro, are found only in the extreme north of Albania. Gabled roofs predominate north of the Drin River; south of it one finds hipped roofs. Widely projecting eaves are absent. The kulas may have low pyramidal roofs and occasionally desk roofs. In general, roofs tend to be flat. When the roof is hipped, the chimney tends to be in the center of the short side (Nopcsa, 1925: 31-32). Chimneys are not typical. [171]

The simplest type of house is the one-room log house with a low roof of short thick shingles. Cracks in the wall are stuffed with moss; windows are lacking, and light enters through the open door and openings in the roof. The open fireplace has hung over it a deflector of boards plastered with mud; smoke escapes through the roof (Nopcsa, 1925: 33). 342 [354]

In the coastal regions of northern Albania, reed is abundant and walls are made of woven reeds. The roof is likewise of reeds. These buildings are generally plastered on the outside. Occasionally the roof is of unfired bricks (Nopcsa, 1925: 35). [824] [184]

342 The simplest stone buildings are made of dry masonry. Windows are lacking. The roof may be made of two rows of boards, 30-40 centimeters wide and rather thick, which are weighted down with stones or with a beam at the eaves. Occasionally they may have a hipped roof covered with stone slabs (Nopcsa, 1925: 35). More common are buildings of mortar and stone. When the interior is partitioned, interior walls are of lighter material, wickerwork or [171] wooden boards. Whereas in Rumania and most of the southern Slav area the entrance leads to the central kitchen, on each side of which are symmetrical rooms, in Albania the hearths are located on either side of the building and there is only a passage between the two side rooms (figs. 50, 51) (Nopcsa, 1925: 39).

More often than one-story houses, one finds two-story ones (only the kulas may have more than two stories). The ground floor has storage rooms and stables, while the second story has two rooms. The stairway to the second story is located on the outside. Often one finds a two-story house that has a veranda along the whole front and a massive masonry stairway leading up to it (fig. 49). When the veranda is encompassed by the side walls of the house it is called a shamashin, when not enclosed, čardak (Nopcsa, 1925: 43). In the veranda house, the basement space under the veranda and the rooms may be partitioned off with dry masonry or wooden boards into small rooms for storage and animals (Nopcsa, 1925: 44).

The stairs leading up to the second story may have wooden banisters. The roof may project over the stairs, or a separate canopy roof may be built over them. Sometimes a small stairway house is built over it (fig. 53) which makes for greater security when stepping out of the house. (The position of the door is always an important factor in Albania). Nopcsa (1925: 53) believes that this staircase is an independent development. One part of the veranda may be walled in to form a small room (fig. 50). The pattern of building separate houses for family members when the family gets too large is not known in Albania. However, in northern Albania this is given consideration when building additions to the house or making changes. If one needs more room, the building is enlarged or a room may be subdivided. Fig. 51 represents modification of a building into two separate units each with its own stairway.

342 Kulas are high tower-like structures of massive masonry that can be defended by a few men. Instead of windows they have loop-holes and sometimes have a bastion-like defense structure on their upper story (fig. 54). Special construction for defense is found [341] even in some of the simple one-room dairy houses. Thus, in one inside corner may be erected a structure, 2.5 meters long and 1.5 meters high, of solid walls covered with a slab roof. It looks very much like an oven, especially as the opening is only 75 centimeters high and 75 centimeters wide (Nopcsa, 1925: 52).

The door of the kula is generally to one side. Stairs to the second story are on the inside and may be merely ladders that lean

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Yugoslavia EF1
Albania EG1 •
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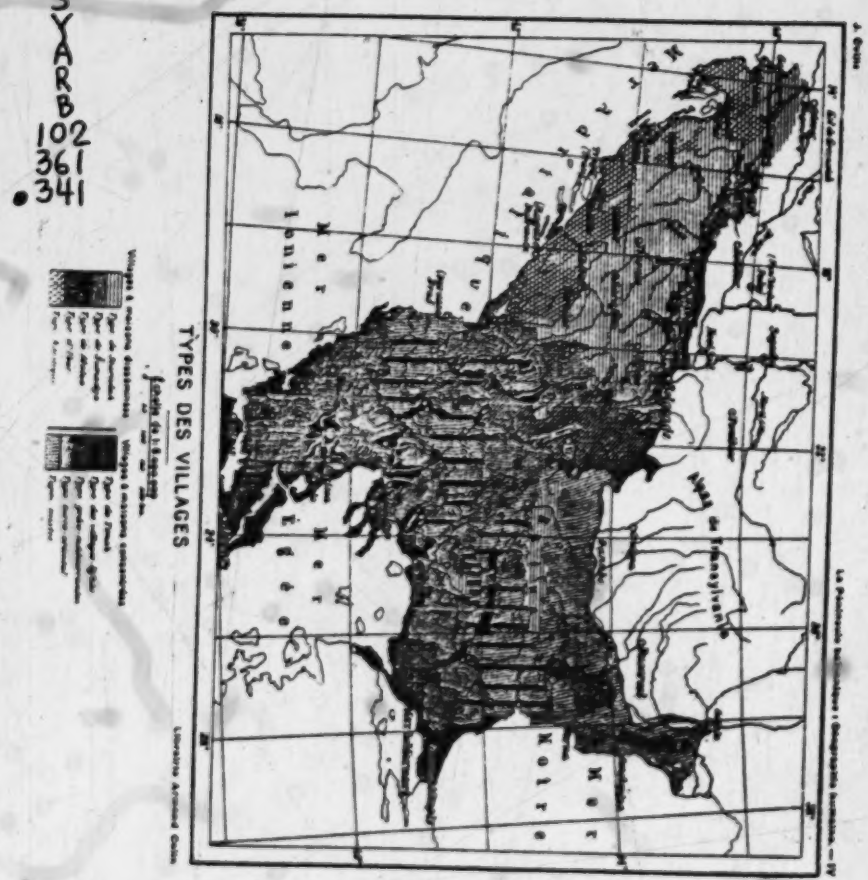

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